

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM USDEL SECRETARY IN LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTO 27145

NODIS

FOR HABIB AND ATHERTON FROM SECRETARY

PASS URGENTLY TO WHITE HOUSE FOR SCROWCROFT

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, US, IS, EG
SUBJ: INSTRUCTIONS FOR TALKS WITH ISRAELIS ON GULF OF SUEZ--
SEPTEMBER 17

REF: A) STATE 230344 TOSEC 270261

1. FIRST, YOU SHOULD PURSUE FOLLOWING STRATEGY IN TALKS
FRIDAY: OUR PURPOSE IN PRESENT TALKS IS ONLY TO SETTLE
ISSUE OF AMOCO DRILLING AT 304.1 WITHOUT HARRASSMENT BY
SEPTEMBER 21 AND TO LEAVE QUESTION OF FUTURE DRILLING TO
LATER TALKS WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO POSITION OF EITHER SIDE.
I HAD UNDER STOOD FROM DINITZ THAT SUCH A LIMITED
UNDERSTANDING WAS POSSIBLE. TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE MUST
NO RPT NOT INSIST ON ISRAELI COMMITMENT ON FUTURE
DRILLING IN PRESENT TALKS. SIMILARLY, WE CANNOT MAKE
ANY COMMITMENT AS TO OUR POSITION ON FUTURE DRILLING.

2. SECOND, HABIB SHOULD TALK WITH DINITZ PRIVATELY ON
MY BEHALF AND SAY WE ARE PREPARED TO SETTLE 304.1
ISSUE AND LEAVE OTHER ISSUES FOR LATER TALKS. IT CANNOT
SERVE ISRAELI OR U.S. INTERESTS TO HAVE A CONFRONTATION
ON THIS ISSUE NOW. USG WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO

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DEFEND VIGOROUSLY RITH OF U.S. COMPANY TO PURSUE ITS

LEGITIMATE BUSINESS.

3. FULLER EXPOSITION OF OUR POSITION SHOULD BE MADE
ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

-- WE INVITED ISRAELI TEAM TO WASHINGTON TO SETTLE
IMMEDIATE ISSUE OF ALLOWING AMOCO TO DRILL AT SITE
304.1 WITHOUT HARRASSMENT BY SEPTEMBER 21.

-- WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS COULD BE WORKED OUT AS A
PRACTICAL MATTER NOW RPT NOW WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO
THE POSITION OF EITHER SIDE ON AMOCO'S FUTURE
DRILLING OPERATIONS.

--IN RESPONSE TO PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S REQUEST, WE
HAVE DESCRIBED AMOCO'S FUTURE DRILLING PLANS SO THAT
THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT MAKE HIS DECISION ON 304.1
IN THE CONTEXT OF THAT KNOWLEDGE.

-- WE ARE NOT INSISTING ON AN ISRAELI COMMITMENT IN
THE PRESENT TALKS ON AMOCO'S FUTURE DRILLING PLANS,
SOME OF WHICH RELATE TO OPERATIONS IN ESTABLISHED
FIELDS WHICH ISRAELIS HAVE NOT CONTESTED. THOSE CAN
BE DISCUSSED IN FUTURE TALKS.

--BY THE SAME TOKEN, THE U.S. CANNOT BE ASKED TO
COMMIT ITSELF TODAY ON AMOCO'S FUTURE DRILLING PLANS OR
TO PRINCIPLE OF MEDIAN LINE.

--WE ARE NOT, THEREFORE, PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE ISRAELI
PROPOSAL TO AGREE TO AMOCO DRILLING AT 304.1 IF AND
ONLY IF THE U.S. WOULD ASSURE ISRAEL WE WOULD NOT RPT
NOT SUPPORT AMOCO IN EFFORTS TO DRILL AT ANY OTHER
SITE EAST OF PRESENTLY OPERATING WELLS AND PLATFORMS.
IT IS JUST AS UNREALISTIC TO ASK US TO MAKE SUCH A
COMMITMENT AS IT WOULD BE FOR US TO ASK ISRAEL TO
CHANGE ITS POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF RESOLVING AN
IMMEDIATE PRACTICAL PROBLEM.

--OUR PROPOSAL IS TO RESOLVE THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE AT
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304.1 AND THEN TO DISCUSS THE LONGER RANGE PROBLEM
IN LATER TALKS WHEN THE TENSION HAS DIMINISHED. HOW
TO HANDLE LONGER TERM ISSUE CAN BE DISCUSSED WHEN
SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON MEET IN NEW YORK.

--IT WAS THE SECRETARY'S UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS
LIMITED SOLUTION COULD BE ACHIEVED. IT IS ESSENTIAL
THAT IT BE ACHIEVED IN THE PRESENT TALKS SO THAT A

DONFRONTATION CAN BE AVOIDED OVER WHAT WILL BE SEEN
IN THE U.S. AS ISRAELI HARRASSMENT OF AN AMERICAN
COMPANY DOING LEGITIMATE BUSINESS.

--IF THE ISRAELIS WILL NOT AGREE TO THIS LIMITED
UNDERSTANDING, WE WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO EXPLAIN
OUR POSITION IN TERMS OF LONGER-TERM LEGAL ISSUES.
WE ARE TRYING TO AVOID JOINING THAT ISSUE PUBLICLY
NOW BY LIMITED UNDERSTANDING.

4. IN SHORT,I WANT TO BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR BEFORE
AUTHORIZING FURTHER STEPS THAT THERE IS NO IMPLICATION
IN ISRAELI MINDS THAT WE ARE INSISTING ON ISRAELI
COMMITMENT BEYOND DRILLING AT 304.1. WHILE RESERVING
OUR POSITION ON THE FUTURE, WE WILL SETTLE FOR 304.1
TODAY.
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